

FITNESS

Getting Kids Active Begins at Home

Today's youth are less active than they need to be and spend much of their day in sedentary pastimes. Modern life has many advantages and disadvantages that create inactive environments for children and teens. Computers, televisions, phones, videos and music CDs may support communication, education and relaxation, but they also create inactivity and opportunities for extra snacking. This sedentary lifestyle has led to an increase in obesity in children. Parents can battle the sedentary lifestyle of their children by promoting and adopting an active lifestyle for their children, thus decreasing the likelihood of their children being obese.

Suggestions of Promoting Active Kids

1. Expect Activity

Within the earliest weeks and months of birth, babies learn to move and they move to learn. Children are more likely to participate in physical activities if their parents expect them to.

2. Make Traditions

As adults, we look back with fondness on family traditions like summer vacations, Sunday dinners and family outings. Make activity a tradition. Commit to some activity as a family at least once a week. Take a Saturday canoe trip, hike the local trails or walk/run as a family.

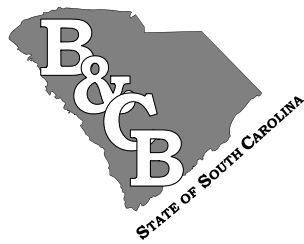
3. Avoid Inactivity

Estimates are that children watch more than 24 hours of TV each week. This much TV/video viewing isn't healthy for their bodies or their brains. You must set limits for TV time. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests no more than two hours of television per day, but education experts encourage less. In some ways, an inactive child is a sick child.

4. Be a Role Model

Kids do what they see. Find an activity that works for you. It may be walking the dog, riding the bike, playing tennis or lifting weights. Their appreciation for activity starts with you!

Source: American College of Sports Medicine.



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